*High Falcon*

*&*

*Other Poems*

# *High Falcon*
## *& Other Poems*

*by Léonie Adams*

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*To*

*Louise Bogan*

*and*

*Raymond Holden*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Léonie Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. She was graduated from Barnard College in 1922, and since then has been employed as a teacher of English, a research secretary, and an editorial assistant. In 1928 Miss Adams was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for creative writing abroad which was renewed in 1929, and is now living in Paris. Her first published poem appeared in a periodical in 1921. In 1924 she became one of the editors of the *Poetry Magazine*, *The Measure*. A volume of lyrics, *Those Not Elect*, was published in 1925. In 1927 certain of the poems in this volume were included in *American Poetry*, a miscellany. Others appeared in *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Palms*, and *The Saturday Review of Literature*, by whose kind permission they are here reprinted.

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## WINDY WAY

The wind comes fast at heels with time
And bends the yellow tops of hay,
And somewhere in the running wind
I cast a thing I had away.
It was my life, or so I said,
And I did well, forsaking it,
To go as quickly as the dead.
For more than every traveller wise,
They're off before their dawdling kin
Can drop the pennies on their eyes,
Knowing it would be vain to tell,
Who have so vast a leave in mind,
If all night long a fare you well.

I did not give a backward look,
Yet could remember, if I would,
The lost was twenty jewels' worth
And dearer to my heart than blood;
And "Leave me here," its mourner cried,
And in God's truth I think I did,
Because I have so free a side;
And past the hollow ribs a bird
By chance came in, and ever since,
And light as grass, his voice is heard.
The cage is open, he may go,
For since winged love has languished there,
I'll use no other winged thing so.

## CARYATID

Not at midnight, not at morning, O sweet city,
Shall we come in at your portal, but this girl, your
servant,
Bearing on her head a broken stone,
In the body shaped to this, the throat and bosom
Poised no less for the burden now the temple is fallen,
Tells the white Athenian wonder overthrown.

There is no clasp which stays beauty forever.
Time has undone her, from porphyry, from bronze.
She is winged every way and will not rest;
But the gesture of the lover shall remain long after,
Where lovely and imponderable there leans
A weight more grave than marble on the breast.

# GHOSTLY TREE

O BEECH, unbind your yellow leaf, for deep
The honeyed time lies sleeping, and lead shade
Seals up the eyelids of its golden sleep.
Long are your flutes, chimes, little bells, at rest,
And here is only the cold scream of the fox,
Only the hunter following on the hound;
While your quaint-plumaged,
The bird that your green summer boughs lapped round,
Bends south its soft bright breast.

Before the winter and the terror break,
Scatter the leaf that broadened with the rose
Not for a tempest, but a sigh, to take.
Four nights to exorcise the thing that stood
Bound by these frail which dangle at your branch,
They ran a frosty dagger to its heart;
And it, wan substance,
No more remembered it might cry or start
Or stain a point with blood.

## EARLY WAKING

Four hooves rang out and now are still.
In the dark wall the casements hold
Essential day above each sill,
Just light, and colored like thin gold.
Behind those hooves a drowsy course
All night I rode where hearts were clear,
And wishes blessèd at the source,
And for no shape of time stop here.

No more to raise that lively ghost
Which ran quicksilver to the bone:
By a whim's turn the whole was lost
When all its marrow worth was known.
Ghosts can cast shadows in the breast,
And what was present tears to weep,
Not heart nor mind would bid from rest
As fast as sorrow's, ten years deep.

I travel, not for a ghost's sake,
One step from sleep, and not for one
Left sleeping at my side I wake.
Before bricks rosy with the dawn,
The hooves will sound beyond the light:
There are dark roads enough to go
To last us through the end of night,
And I will make my waking slow.

It was for unconcerning light
That has not fallen on earth, to stare

An instant only out of night
And with night's cloudy character,
Before the laden mind shall slip
Past dream and on to brightmost dream
And fetterless high morning dip
Her two cold sandals in the stream.

## THE ROUNDS AND GARLANDS DONE

Now the golden looks are spent
And light no more will brim from the large air,
But green and changeling drips from the little round
Of the close branch;
And the shadow, born of nothing,
Glides over the green ground.

Day that cast the lovely looks is sped;
And from the turf, circled with white dew,
The lovers and the children are gone,
Leaving the wreath, the bouquet fresh, looped up with
grasses;
All the golden looks are spent,
And the time of the rounds and the garlands done.

High from a drowning heart the waters' cry
Rises subdued to silver and is lost
On the pure bell of silence, and the petal
Whose sweetness drooped the spray,
Drained now of lustre, rides
Upon a soundless wind
More light than any ghost.

Cast on the turning wastes of wind
Are cords that none can touch or see,
Are threads of subtle ore which bind
The grains of wandering air to peace.
If any stretch a hand to find
How fast, how gold a stuff it be,
He will but dizzy the poor mind
With bending from the steeps of peace;
And though rest catch him in once more,
He is bewildered there, like birds
The storm beat to the door.

The day comes wildly up the east,
Because the cup of vision broke,
And those clear silver floods released
Go ravaging the calm sky of night;
And all who to that seeing woke
Look coldly on a common sight,
As to outstare substantial stuff.
The substance never is enough
When lids are drenched apart by light.
Before the light shall fade again
They drag a shadow forth from it
To print upon the barren brain.

And though when lips are parched to tell
What brooded on the lips too long,

They quench them at a noisy well,
The noise of waters is so sweet
They say, The heart has ease of this,
And no more all its burden is
Than the catch of an old song;
And then to a lost catch repeat
The carking woe, the little bliss:
Like things every mortal hears,
But these tell them in a tongue
Barbarous to your ears.

## THE HORN

WHILE coming to the feast I found
A venerable silver-throated horn,
Which were I brave enough to sound,
Then all, as from that moment born,
Would breathe the honey of this clime,
And three times merry in their time
Would praise the virtue of the horn.

The mist is risen like thin breath;
The young leaves of the ground smell chill,
So faintly are they strewn on death,
The road I came down a west hill;
But none can name as I can name
A little golden-bright thing, flame,
Since bones have caught their marrow chill.

And in a thicket passed me by,
In the black brush, a running hare,
Having a spectre in his eye,
That sped in darkness to the snare;
And who but I can know in pride
The heart, set beating in the side,
Has but the wisdom of a hare?

## EVERY BIRD OF NATURE

Every bird of nature
Has a true wing,
Save one that has the feather
Of a foreign thing.
The pulse in his bosom was so luckless and wild
He spied a feather in the grass
And plucked it from the bright dews lying,
Brighter than dew with witcheries . . .
So ever false he flies.

The thicket of birds
Is quivering with wings,
And freshly there when bush is in sprig,
The linnet sings.
But the bird that I name,
Though with a gentle body,
Must nest him in flame,
And calls to his love,
The bird that I tell,
A Love fare you well.

You should have fashioned
Your musician, Death,
Of the strung wires,
Cold air his breath.
Dearest and last you bound

In a dark harmony,
It has a sweet sound;
But death's a cruel note,
Set in a mortal throat.

# THE LAMENT OF QUARRY

The hunter of huntsmen bred
That looked on his quarry slain
The lament of quarry made:
"Would you had your beauty again!
Light and lovely its part
Stepping on velvet feet;
It is heavy in my heart.

"A sweet and wild decoy all night in sleep
I set lest any rove,
Snares I planted subtle and deep;
It was no guile, but love.
The gentle entered without fright
And bent upon the hunter's look
Their eyes of delicate light.

"Of my father's father I got a proud steed,
And a barb of my father I took—
O cunning barb of which you bleed—
But a white hind gave me suck.
For I was cradled in hardihood,
But a mild doe, but the hind pity,
With strangeness thinned my blood.

"Fierce and beauteous the hawk,
But where is the natureless creature
That has confusion for his part?
To the greyhound his fleet foot,
To the moorhen her light wing,
And the waste track of beauty to the heart."

## BELL TOWER

I HAVE seen, O desolate one, the voice has its tower,
The voice also, builded at secret cost,
Its temple of precious tissue. Not silent then
Forever—casting silence in your hour.

There marble boys are leant from the light throat,
Thick locks that hang with dew and eyes dewlashed,
Dazzled with morning, angels of the wind,
With ear a-point to the enchanted note.

And these at length shall tip the hanging bell,
And first the sound must gather in deep bronze,
Till, rarer than ice, purer than a bubble of gold,
It fill the sky to beat on an airy shell.

## THE RIVER IN THE MEADOWS

Crystal parting the meads,
A boat drifted up it like a swan.
Tranquil, lovely, its bright front to the waters,
A slow swan is gone.

Full waters, O flowing silver,
Pure, level with the clover,
It will stain drowning a star,
With the moon it will brim over.

Running through lands dewy and shorn,
Cattle stoop at its brink,
And every fawny-colored throat
Will sway its bells and drink.

I saw a boat sailing the river
With a tranced gait. It seemed
Loosed by a spell from its moorings,
Or a thing the helmsman dreamed.

They said it would carry no traveller,
But the vessel would go down,
If a heart were heavy-winged,
Or the bosom it dwelt in stone.

## ACQUITTAL

The barbarous bird,
It will not tame.
The plumage glistening over straw,
O the wild thing snared,
Will set me at shame.

It was decoyed,
But cannot change.
Its wing with beating lonely air,
Its beak with tasting wilderness berry,
Its look and lovely flight are strange.

What lover sullen,
What love all paltering,
Possesses the gold bough of heaven,
Or who loving
Beset the royal wandering thing?

Dearest, beauty, begone.
The eye holds you, dreaming apart;
Go, dearest and beauty,
Pursued but by the heart-driven longing
After the savage heart.

# THE MOON AND SPECTATOR

In the dead of the night
I got from my bed;
The air stretched hollow,
A theatre of the dead.

The night was half sunk and the wind gone,
The passion of the wind had gone down;
But the boughs shaken a little, blanched a little,
Spectrally, by the moon.

The moon performed her march fantastic,
The harrier of clouds, a flame half seen,
Or full in the high sky, the royal sables being spread,
A withered queen.

The moon, that chill frame, I saw enact
Her rite commemorative of a bound ghost,
And thought of a night wildly born, outliving storm,
And its tears lost.

Almost without pulse, a spectator to the moon,
A dream of some fashion set the body awake,
But called to the heart in the deeps of sleep how rising
From sleep again it would break.

## THE MYSTERIOUS THING

What plummet, seas, to sound you—
All the long reaches spun out silver-white,
Turn you and cast drowned riches?
Or how again, O velvet night,
When the sky, stooping with its glittering load,
About the elf-locks of the curious grass
Scatters its sparklings, will you part almost
Upon the quintessential host?

Or how the figment spirit sleeping
Can it render body, ghost,
In its dream unseat the heavy monarch,
Conjure to the bleak wild coast
Its sunk, its deep delight,
Its night of mists divide, recall how flitting
Above the pallid thing,
Joy has an azure wing?

## EVENING SKY

How now are we tossed about by a windy heaven,
The eye that scans it madded to discern
In a single quarter all the wild ravage of light,
Amazing light to quiver and suddenly turn
Before the stormy demon fall of night;
And yet west spaces saved celestial
With silver sprinklings of the anointed sun.
The eye goes up for certitude,
Driven hither and thither on that shifty scene
To the dome closing like impenetrable hoar,
And down from the cold zenith drops abashed;
O desolation rent by intolerable blue
Of the living heaven's core,
Nor death itself at last the heavenly whim.
For how can an eye sustain
To watch heaven slain and quickening, or do
To stretch in its little orbit and contain
Sky balancing chaos in an inconstant rim?

## SUNDOWN

This is the time lean woods shall spend
A steeped-up twilight, and the pale evening drink,
And the perilous roe, the leaper to the west brink,
Trembling and bright to the caverned cloud descend.

Now shall you see pent oak gone gusty and frantic,
Stooped with dry weeping, ruinously unloosing
The sparse disheveled leaf, or reared and tossing
A dreary scarecrow bough in funeral antic.

Aye, tatter you and rend,
Oak heart, to your profession mourning; not obscure
The outcome, not crepuscular; on the deep floor
Sable and gold match lustres and contend.

And rags of shrouding will not muffle the slain.
This is the immortal extinction, the priceless wound
Not to be staunched. The live gold leaks beyond,
And matter's sanctified, dipped in a gold stain.

## ELEGY COMPOSED IN LATE MARCH

More than the lovely who prevail?
But very love must know
By no perduring thing
Can this be known.
Though with attributes of marble,
It is a mortal beauty
Never hewn in stone.

To what they loved and destroyed,
Never had their fill of cherishing and would not save,
Even the gods fixed no star;
But more in sign
The rainbow's meltings and the reed
And the slight narcissus gave.

## COUNSEL TO UNREASON

These lover's inklings which our loves enmesh,
Lost to the cunning and dimensional eye,
Though tenemented in the selves we see,
Not more perforce than azure to the sky,
Were necromancy-juggled to the flesh,
And startled from no daylight you or me.

For trance and silverness those moons commend,
Which blanch the warm life silver-pale; or look
What ghostly portent mist distorts from slight
Clay shapes; the willows that the waters took
Liquid and brightened in the waters bend,
And we, in love's reflex, seem loved of right.

Then no more think to net forthwith love's thing,
But cast for it by spirit sleight-of-hand;
Then only in the slant glass contemplate,
Where lineament outstripping line is scanned,
Then on the perplexed text leave pondering,
Love's proverb is set down transliterate.

# TWILIT REVELATION

This hour was set the time for heaven's descent,
Come drooping toward us on the heavy air,
The sky, that's heaven's seat, above us bent,
Blue faint as violet ash, you near me there
In nether space, so drenched in goblin blue
I could touch Hesperus as soon as you.

Now I perceive you, lapped in singling light,
Washed by that blue which sucks whole planets in,
And hung like those top jewels of the night
A mournful gold too high for love to win.
And you, poor brief, poor melting star, you seem
Half sunk and half to brighten in that stream.

And these rich-bodied hours of our delight
Show like a mothwing's substance when the fall
Of confine-loosing, blue, unending night
Extracts the spirit of this temporal.
So space can pierce the crevice wide between
Fast hearts, skies deep descended intervene.

## MAGNIFICAT IN LITTLE

I WAS enriched, not casting after marvels,
But as one walking in a usual place,
Without desert but common eyes and ears,
No recourse but to hear, power but to see,
Got to love you of grace.

Subtle musicians, that could body wind,
Or contrive strings to anguish, in conceit
Random and artless strung a branch with bells,
Fixed in one silver whim, which at a touch
Shook and were sweet.

And you, you lovely and unpurchased note,
One run distraught, and vexing hot and cold
To give to the heart's poor confusion tongue,
By chance caught you, and henceforth all unlearned
Repeats you gold.

Now the rich cherry, whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced,
Like a strict box its gems encased,
Has spilt from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round,
Those melting rubies which it hid;
With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry
To taste that deep-red, lark's-bite berry,
And blackcap bloom is yellow-dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,
And side by side with the wren's brood—
O lovely time of beggars' luck—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud;
And full and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house,
But all night nibble under boughs,
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm baking smell's blown round,
Inside and out, and sky and ground
Are much the same, the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early born,

Is risen only finger-far;
All stars stand close in summer air,
And tremble, and look mild as amber,
When wicks are lighted in the chamber,
You might say, stars were settling there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay,
Down the still light the mowers look,
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,
And they waked half to other days,
When left alone in the yellow stubble
The rusty-coated mare would graze.
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born,
Another thought can come to mind,
But like the shivering of the wind,
Morning and evening in the corn.

# THE GIFT

When this whole charity of love
Could nothing, to my sight there passed,
If the wide eye might open again,
The daemon by your beauty cast;
And as the one fit thing I'd found,
"Touch with your wing," I said, "that one
Whose sorrow in loveliness you bound.
No more I'll skim the running song
Which flies like waters, lost as told,
So leave you to that throat of gold
The pulse above the heart of sound;
And all that stainless peace you show,
Wherein to dip this ruin and pain,
Back to that lovely breast of storm
My peace I sign again."
Yet cruel is the seal of sense.
With my mute breath I signed this thing,
And saw but the averted head
And the poor body shuddering.
When ears are deafened and sight blind,
And hearts laid naked to the wind,
Creatures of air, and cloudy-shod
Ride like a wind upon the mind,
But what of their wild hollow play,
What shape of all to his most dear,
No one on earth can say.

## NOW LOSS LIKE TEMPEST

Now loss like tempest raging at the heart,
Love, pricked by that poor self to which it came—
A thing that slept and waked upon a dream—
Uneasy for its birthright, turns to chart
Its landscape, whether comfortless in kind
It orient no more, but is exile thence.
And knows again creation's excellence:
Your fact, and its proud sight, by self made blind,
Two stars which issue of the storm, the pure
Indifferent contours of this earth and sky
That unasked offer it sustenance and breath,
And depth on depth of being, and the sure
Estate in that it was engendered by,
None cheats it of save by doing it to death.

## SONG

Wind blows over the heart
But the heart is fast in the breast,
So only give a sigh after the wind.
A heart that is pinned to the wind
Turns in the side without rest.

Or if you will bear in mind
The stream and the swan gone,
Scattering from its cold plumage the drops
of the foam,
Then liken the heart rather
To the stream sailed of a swan.

So wide the wells of darkness sink,
These having their own light, that are lost with the
light,
Appear immersed in mournfulness over the night,
Like things that in sleep will come to the mind's brink:
The bright Aldebaran, and seven that hover,
Seven wild and pale, clouding their brightness over,
And the flame that fell with summer, and the rose of
stars returning,
Like tears piercing the sky;
Glittering without cause, for the piece of a legend,
Wept, I know not why.
O lovely and forgotten,
Gathered only of sleep,
All night upon the lids set burning,
Shaken from the lids at morning.

## SLEEP TO WAKING

The mind that a dream left sullen
Turns to the cold clouded light
And broods as on a thing lifted from sleep,
Upon the bough that shows its bodily leaves
Colored like shadows, withdrawing them from night;
Pondering how many nights ago,
Nested among those leaves, the marvelous flock
Was telling with its many honey tongues
The tale of sleep, or if those leaves or no,
Since now an elder mind must climb so deep
Into sleep's well, after such image there,
Or stranger nature, if it come at all,
It will come unremembering out of sleep.

TODAY he sickens with his hurt,
And straight behind the ribs it drove,
Tipped with more bitter mystery
Than a fresh heart is master of;
But only once young hardihood
Can seem to cost the heart its blood.

For time will mix his blood with wit,
And easy will he rise and go
To have a dozen merry wars,
And never wincing for the foe.
So all the ghostly heroes play
Whose wounds are healed at close of day.

## SONG FROM A COUNTRY FAIR

When tunes jigged nimbler than the blood
And quick and high the bows would prance
And every fiddle string would burst
To catch what's lost beyond the string,
While half afraid their children stood,
I saw the old come out to dance.
The heart is not so light at first,
But heavy like a bough in spring.

## LULLABY

Hush, lullay.
Your treasures all
Encrust with rust,
Your trinket pleasures fall
To dust.

Beneath the sapphire arch,
Upon the grassy floor,
Is nothing more
To hold,
And play is over-old.
Your eyes
In sleepy fever gleam,
Your lids droop
To their dream.
You wander late alone,
The flesh frets on the bone,
Your love fails in your breast,
Here is the pillow.
Rest.

## TO UNCONSCIONABLE SOUND

Go, fill the bell of the wind
With the sweet unconscionable sound;
Do not breathe on the mind:
It is an indifferent shell,
Long whittled underwave,
And had no timbre's form
When the glittering wave withdrew
But what its waters gave.
Go twist the wind to a bell,
Or let it whip and turn
To any change you will
The visionary cloud;
They are innocent essence still.
But not the brooding heart,
A cloud that wraps about
The tempest it outwept,
And elemented then,
When the cold fancy rose
Which shakes off a heart like a dream
In the hollow where it slept.

# TWO WORDS FOR HARVEST

## 1.

You lovely and terrible charity, by which
This nutriment was given from the wild airs,
Bend now above the heart and its lonely field.
For it has suckled the root, and bowed to the sharp
sickle; and there is spread,
Untouched of any hand, the store that it must yield
To lie unharvested.
Bend for a moment only. The heart, of your still look,
Receives, even now, so stricken and so torn,
A peace more plenteous than drops, far off,
A harvest night, from heaven upon the corn.

## 2.

The year turns to its rest.
Up from the earth, the fields, the early-fallen dew,
Moves the large star of autumn, Arcturus perfect-
pointed,
And summer calls with her many voices upon the frost.

I who have not seen for weeping
The plum ripen and fall, or the yellowing sheaf,
Am not unmindful now of the season that came and
went,
The hours that told off sweetness,
The bud and the rich leaf.

Though I turned aside before the summer
And weathered but a season of the mind,
Let me sit among you when the husk is stripped,
Let me learn of the bright grain,
How I labored in an acre of cloud and reaped the wind.

## KENNST DU DAS LAND

No, I have borne in mind this hill,
For once before I came its way
In hours when summer held her breath
Above her innocents at play;
Knew the leaves deepening the green ground
With their green shadows, there as still
And perfect as leaves stand in air;
The bird who takes delight in sound
Giving his young and watery call,
That is each time as if a fall
Flashed silver and were no more there,
And knew at last, when day was through,
That sky in which the boughs were dipped
More thick with stars than fields with dew;
And in December brought to mind
The laughing child to whom they gave
Among these slopes, upon this grass,
The summer-hearted name of love.
Still can you follow with your eyes,
Where on the green and golden ground
The dancers will not break the round,
The beechtrees carved of moonlight rise;
Still at their roots the violets burn,
Lamps whose flame is soft as breath.
But turn not so, again, again,
They clap me in their wintry chain;
I know the land whereto you turn,
And know it for a land of death.

## A GRAY DOORWAY

THE whippoorwill calls out at dusk
As once, across the summer grass,
When I in your gray doorway stood,
And wished, before such time should pass
As our thought fell from rhyme, a spell
Would make all fast, the dews not fade,
Nor on the branch the small green apples swell.

A lonely velvet fall of night
I would have paid, no monstrous cost,
Now even our suns drop, out of time,
For room to dwell on seasons lost,
Where looks and accents, all, come strange;
But dusk so kind a tavern keeps
I had of it that little silver change.

A FALL over rock,
Metal answering to water,
Is the seal of this spot;
A land trodden by music
And the song forgot.

Of a region savage,
The territory that was broken,
Silver gushed free,
And earth holy, earth meek shall receive it
In humility.

But this, not habited but haunted,
The country of the proud,
Is curdling to stone
And careless of the feet of the waters
As they glance from it down.

This that is washed with weed and pebblestone
Curved once a dolphin's length before the prow,
And I who read the land to which we bore
In its grave eyes, question my idol now,
What cold and marvelous fancy it may keep,
Since the salt terror swept us from our course,
Or if a wisdom later than the storm,
For old green ocean's tinctured it so deep;
And with some reason to me on this strand
The waves, the ceremonial waves have come
And stooped their barbaric heads, and all spread out
Their lovely arms before them, and are gone,
Leaving their murderous tribute on the sand.

## SEND FORTH THE HIGH FALCON

Send forth the high falcon flying after the mind
To topple it from its cold cloud:
The beak of the falcon to pierce it till it fall
Where the simple heart is bowed.
O in wild innocence it rides
The rare ungovernable element,
But once it sways to terror and descent,
The marches of the wind are its abyss,
No wind staying it upward of the breast—
Let mind be proud for this,
And ignorant from what fabulous cause it dropt,
And with how learned a gesture the unschooled heart
Shall lull both terror and innocence to rest.

## MANY MANSIONS

The last majority attained,
And shut from its small house of dust,
Into the heritage of air
The spirit goes because it must:
And halts before the multiple plane
To look more ways than left and right,
And weeping walks its father's house
Like something homeless in the night:
For now less largely let abroad,
Though but the world they say is mine,
I shiver as I take the road.

# TIME AND SPIRIT

Spirit going with me here,
If thou tellest time aright,
It's by some ancestral clock
Older than the golden sun,
And his measure trod with night.

Rarely by my calendar
Bite or sup for thee is spread,
Yet thou comst not grace forgone
As the jostling starvelings do,
But most mannerly art fed.

Half my store consumes to keep
This poor lamp which warmeth me.
Thou that takst no thought to live
In a delicate excess
Spendst more brightness than I see.

How should thou and I keep step?
Threescore ten was set my race
Of just distancing the worm;
But a lifetime to a sphere
Lends a more exalted pace.

## THE MOUNT

No, I have tempered haste,
The joyous traveller said,
The steed has passed me now
Whose hurrying hooves I fled.
My spectre rides thereon,
I learned what mount he has,
Upon what summers fed,
And wept to know again,
Beneath the saddle swung,
Treasure for whose great theft
This breast was wrung.
His bridle bells sang out,
I could not tell their chime,
So brilliantly he rings,
But called his name as Time.
His bin was morning light,
Those straws which gild his bed
Are of the fallen West.
Although green lands consume
Beneath their burning tread,
In everlasting bright
His hooves have rest.

## WINTER SOLSTICE

DECEMBER, mortal season, crusts
The dark snows shuffled in the street,
And rims the lamp with sleet.
The beggar, houseless, chill, and thin,
Leans to the chestnut vendor's coals,
The cart creaks off which trails the winter bush,
And the thick night shuts in.

Prepare the sun his bier,
The sun, the fallen year,
With all the spoil it yields,
For their fresh almanach is shrunk and dry.
Those pheasants whose proud tread
Made royal summer fields
Hang speckled crop to crop,
And strung before the gamester's shop
The hare stares out with frozen eye.

O festival most rich,
Converting dead times green,
Which from bare forests plucks
The circumspect bright bush
That burnt among the boughs blackened and thinned.
The bright unwithered leaf that none had seen
Before both leaf and burr were trodden down,
And the wild summer streamed upon the wind.
The sun declines in pride,
The year draws underground.

With much beside.
The flesh which has survived,
Outlived its times' defeat,
Rides now the skeleton,
Secure by what is gone,
To taste a pious meat.
How should that other praise,
Whose loss does not corrupt,
The triumph of its days?
See this—that had
Not more than breath in mind—
The mortal, feasts unblanched
Among a dying kind.
Then, spirit, if you must
Give a more lasting forfeit than the dust
That owes but to the West,
Reflect, a more entire estate
Is of such charge possessed,
And lordly calendars its progress show.
For that sun's course which measured the extent
Of so much treasurable worth
Saw your goods tried, not spent.
You scorned to hold of time, and so
Get not time's rate,
But sign alone
The payment without date.
Its little tithe must cost the dust as dear,
That, ringed with death,
Makes its own mock in this late wreath,
A twelvemonth green, and in the binding sere.

THE

JOHN DAY




COMPANY

INC.